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Drill as a Process of Education

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Abstract

This review paper examines drill as a process of education. The meaning of drill has been examined, its basic features, the general techniques, its relationship with other processes of education, its absurdities as well as its advantages were also examined. Drill as a process that is mostly used in teaching aspects of education that centers on skill acquisition is very relevant in education. Even though drill as a process of education cannot be effectively used in teaching abstract concepts but it is still suitable in teaching concepts that develop psychomotor of individuals. Therefore, drill continues to be one of the important processes in education.
Key words: Drill, Process, Education

1. Introduction

Education as acquiring what is worthwhile and relevant to the society in which one lives is a continuous task throughout lifetime. It has many processes, and Drill is one of them. Despite their similarities and common goal, each of the process has peculiar attributes that distinct it from the remaining. This piece deals with drill and is structured in sub- headings for proper coverage and treatment.

2. The Concept of Drill in Education

Schofield, (1972) defines drill, as "the formation of good or bad habits through regular practice of stereotyped exercises". The habits he talks about seem to be 'at heart' while through practical exercise,' which means the mind adopts the habits and manifest them actively with limbs as instruments.

Drill is also defined by Ryle as quoted by Scheffler, (1965) that it is imposition of repetitions through which habits are built up. He also stresses that the "practices are not learned until the pupils' responses to his cues are automatic, until he can do them in his sleep' as it is revealingly put". He emphasizes that drill dispenses with intelligence as skills and competences are generally' developed through practice, through repeated trial and performance. In essence, his argument is that by drill, facilities are routinizable, becoming increasingly automatic as they are developed.

Akinpelu, (1981) was of the view that drill is a method which is often used in the traditional teaching method to get pupils to learn the first rudiments of a subject. He, by this definition localizes drill by restricting its application only to learning first rudiments of a subject, and we can see that in military sector almost all their physical activities are acquired through drill, and cannot be divorced from education. However, he goes ahead to describe its form and process as he said that "drill is repetition of a piece of learning until one can recite or perform it without mistake. The army- drill inculcates certain movements and ways of behaving in the recruit until they become almost automatic". It can be deduced that drill deals also with things other than physical exercise as recitation can also result from it and the aim is to achieve flawless performance of the exercises in response to appropriate cues or orders. To this end, drill is narrow in aim and content, and calls not for much understanding or intelligence from the person being drilled.

Hirst and Peters (1966) opine that drill is a process of very limited achievements in specific physical movements, which means drill, cannot be applied to learn some aspects as it deals with restricted areas and the outcome is also bounded. Peters (1968) also sees drill as making individuals mindlessly repeating narrowly conceiving stereotyped acts, but his assertion has injury because there is intention and consciousness in drill, so its repetitive nature is not mindless.

According to Caxton, (2000) drill is exercise in which a body of men is taught to act in perfect unison, either for physical development or for the execution of various movements, at various paces and in various formations, by signal or world of command. Gradually, all these condensed actions become mechanical, so that by a word, an officer can set the military machine in motion or bring it to rest. A well drilled body of troops moves 'like one

man', and this subordination of mind and muscle aids discipline. For its regiment exercise nature and physical activities, drill is much associated with military.

Drill is seen unproductive learning situation because of the long period of time spent in the process by repeating a particular task (Caxton, 2000). Drill is evidently 'know how' biased for that most of what it takes care of are skills learned to practice physically, and through practical exercise.

In sum, drill can be seen as frequently repetition of (mostly) physical tasks to automate body systems on them with ease and assimilation, associated with commands. Sometimes, .it is in form of stimulus- response where the commands serve as stimulus while the action serves as the response.

2.1 The Basic Features of Drill

New Universal Library, (1968) puts that drill has some features that makes it different from the other processes of education, which are as follows:

- In drill, there is limit and specification of what is learnt, is not just arbitrarily and open. All the learning tasks taken care of by drill are limited and specific.
- One of the outstanding features of drill is repetition of piece of learning. The .piece of learning acquired through drill is not something just for one time or so, it has to be frequently repeated so that one can be accustom to it.
- Majority of the tasks involved and dealt with by drill are physical skills (exercise). Even if there is cognitive aspect, physical dominates the realm, probably why drill is attributed mostly to military for its rigorousity and consistency.
- Another feature of drill is automation of and habitualization of exercise/ performance so that they would become part and parcel of one, so that one can learn them at heart and practice them with automation even in his sleep.
- The tasks learnt through drill are associated with commands, in the sense that command/instruction makes the basic instrument for drill. All the performances are done with command and obey principle that is why in military where drill is prevalent there is attached to every platoon an instructor who commands. Even in schools, whatever task learners are being drilled on, command has to be there at integral degree.

In educational sector or else, the above mentioned contents are visible as long as it's drill.

2.2 General Techniques of Drill

Shipley, Cann, Hilderbrand & Mitchel (1968) stand on the opinion that drill has some techniques which defined the rational side of it and its potentialities of yielding fruits. Thus:

- Make use of child's desire to play
- Make all practice periods short
- Make use of incidental drill situations
- Use the new and older skills already established in its operation
- Try team competitions and thereby add interest
- Have pupils read aloud in pairs
- In spelling, assist learners to learn by themselves
- Give practice in "mental arithmetic"
- Use prepared workbooks and worksheets based on the skills to be acquired
- Give additional practice through life-situation units
- Give a variety of paper- and- pencil exercises
- Give praise for improvement in skill performance
- Have three or four interesting practice periods the first day.
- Insist on accuracy at first, then speed
- Homework should be given to provide drill
- Never expect perfect outcome from all
- When a drill period is finished, put the class to work on a task, unrelated to the drill.

Though the techniques have cognitive and physical relevance, they are more •of classroom application. Yet, they present drill as what allows individual to learn by doing and retain the learning permanently.

3. Drill and Other Processes of Education

Schofield (1972) and Emmanuel, (2011) stick to the opinion that drill, like any other process of education has similarities and elements of other processes, which include:

- ❖ It is relevant to teaching because teaching involves intention and drill also composes it.' For teaching, intention (for imparting the knowledge by the teacher and learning by the learners) is basic and these apply to drill.
- ❖ Drill has some elements of training being of much physical skills and performance which also the drill deals with, this is why at times it seems difficult to differentiate between the two.
- ❖ Drill also goes with "command and obey" as integral instrument just like instruction, which means the two have similarity in this regard.
- ❖ It also takes some form of indoctrination as learners are restricted to the determined and calculated learning task; no room for initiative, criticism, discrimination or alternative which is the center of indoctrination.

3.1 The Absurdities of Drill

Barlotti in Caxton, (2000) views that drill has the following absurdities.

- ✓ It promotes rote memorization more than meaningful understanding and to some extents, dulls creativity.
- ✓ If done in excess, it is likely to destroy initiative.
- ✓ Frequency of repetition in drill sometimes makes it boring.
- ✓ It is to some degree dependent on attributes of other processes of education.
- ✓ There is limitation and specification of what is to be taught through drill.
- ✓ Even having to spend long time on repetitive tasks is a sign that learning is not taking place

3.2 The Good Sides of Drill

Despite the critique, drill has it merits. Sa'ad, (2009), Lewis, (2013) and Mohammed, (2015), were of the opinion that drill has the following good sides or advantages:

- ✓ It ensure perfection of skills
- ✓ It makes learning more permanent as it is made habit at heart and practical in limbs by doing.
- ✓ In most times, it's interesting
- ✓ It allows learners to learn by themselves.
- ✓ It holds what has already been grasped
- ✓ Reinforcement is present in drill.

4. Conclusion

Upon all the short comings of drill, it still stands as a reliable method of imparting knowledge to learners though is not in every subject, abstract content subjects as a case, drill applies to practice-based subjects that are favored by the procedures of the process in question, satisfying which leaves behind less blame for its suitability. However, logical discrimination is inevitable regarding application on the ground of relativism which is very healthy in education.

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